

Appl. No.: 10/034,817
Amendment Dated December 19, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 26, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

- 1 - 2 (Cancelled)
3. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 2 ~~[[1]]~~, including at least one additional layer located between said first and second ~~fibrous~~ layers of carded staple fibers.
4. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 3, wherein at least one additional layer comprises meltblown microfibers.
5. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 2 ~~[[1]]~~, wherein the first ~~fibrous~~ layer comprises from 10 to 100 percent by weight of said bicomponent or biconstituent fibers.
- 6 - 8 (Cancelled) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second fibrous layers is a spunbonded web.
9. (Previously Amended) A nonwoven fabric which comprises:
a first layer of carded staple fibers defining one outer surface of the fabric;
a second layer of carded staple fibers defining an opposite outer surface of the fabric; and
a pattern of discrete fusion bonds bonding the fibers of the first layer and the fibers of the second layer to form a coherent multi-layer fabric;
the fibers of the first layer comprising a substantially homogeneous blend of polypropylene staple fibers and polyethylene/polypropylene bicomponent or biconstituent staple fibers in which the polyethylene component is present at the surface of the fibers; and
the fibers of the second layer comprising polypropylene staple fibers,
wherein said fusion bonds are formed by passing the fabric through a calender nip defined between a smooth calender roll and a patterned calender roll, and wherein said bonds exhibit on said one outer surface a relatively non-indented configuration resulting from contact

Appl. No.: 10/034,817

Amendment Dated December 19, 2005

Reply to Office Action of September 26, 2005

with said smooth calender roll, and wherein the bonds on said opposite surface of the fabric exhibit a relatively indented embossed configuration resulting from contact with said patterned calender roll.

10. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 9, wherein said first and second layers of fibers are bonded directly to one another by said thermal bonds.

11. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 9, wherein the fibers of the first layer comprise a blend of polypropylene staple fibers and polyethylene-polypropylene sheath-core bicomponent fibers in which the polyethylene component is the sheath and the polypropylene component is the core.

12. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 9, wherein said first layer comprises from 40% to 100% by weight of said sheath core bicomponent fibers and from 0 to 60% by weight of said polypropylene fibers, and wherein said first layer of fibers comprises approximately 40% to 60% by weight of said fabric.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Amended) A nonwoven fabric which comprises:
a first layer of carded staple fibers defining one outer surface of the fabric;
a second layer of carded staple fibers defining an opposite outer surface of the fabric; and
a pattern of discrete thermal bonds bonding the fibers of the first layer and the fibers of the second layer to form a coherent multi-layer fabric;
the fibers of the first layer comprising a substantially homogeneous blend of about 50% by weight polypropylene staple fibers and 50% by weight polyethylene/polypropylene sheath-core bicomponent staple fibers; and
the fibers of the second layer comprising 100% polypropylene staple fibers,
wherein said bonds are formed by passing the fabric through a calender nip defined between a smooth calender roll and a patterned calender roll, and wherein said bonds exhibit on said one outer surface a relatively non-indented configuration resulting from contact

Appl. No.: 10/034,817
Amendment Dated December 19, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 26, 2005

with said smooth calender roll, and wherein the bonds on said opposite surface of the fabric exhibit a relatively indented embossed configuration resulting from contact with said patterned calender roll.

15. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising two nonwoven fabrics according to claim 9 [[1]], positioned with said one outer surface thereof in opposing face-to-face contact with one another and including a zone of thermal fusion defining a seam joining the two fabrics together.

16 – 20 (Cancelled)